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A Beautiful Story.

From the Lady's Book, for January.

May: The Squatter's Daughter.

BY METTA VICTORIA VICTOR.

CHAPTER I.

The squatter, Peter Potter, sat in the door of his cabin watching the sun go down, far away over the prairie. His hard, bronzed face glowed red in the crimson light.

"Dry, dry!" he muttered. "It'll be as dry as an unmilked cow, by the sign of the sun's going down so hot and red. I declar' this is bad!" And he looked with some anxiety towards the field of stunted corn which lay at the right of the house. He had reason to feel troubled, for not a drop of rain had fallen for three weeks; and the whole dependence of the family for food during the ensuing year was in the corn crop and the potatoes. For, if the corn was eaten, they would have then the wherewithal to keep the two pigs grunting lazily in a sty only only a little back of the cabin, but pigs and children would have to suffer together.

There was no market within a hundred miles of the squatter, and but few neighbors within that distance. He had settled in this remote spot because the prairie land was rich and easily tilled, requiring no wearisome process of "c'earing," and he could help himself to as much as he desired. His tent was pitched—that is to say, his log hut was erected—with rare discrimination for a squatter, in the midst of a clump of trees on a slight rise of ground, and but about a rod from a large spring, whose clear waters flowed from the hill-side in a small stream, which served to irrigate his land somewhat. This little brook, flowing straight through his corn-field, was not enough to keep the broad leaves from turning yellow through the drought;—and, for the past two or three days, he imagined that the spring itself had fallen considerably. If its supplies should give out, through the failure of its sources, he knew that great suffering would be the consequence; therefore he had been watching the indications of the heavens with earnestness, and was not a little troubled to see the sun sink, like a great ball of dull, red-hot iron, heavily below the horizon.

"I declar', wife!" said he, looking back into his dwelling, "thir's no more prospects of rain until the moon's changes, ef then. The sun's gone down as red as the kiver of the bake-kettle you're a heatin' on the coals thir. The corn's a wiltin' down like a girl's that's sick with the heart-distemper; and here it is nigh on to the middle of July; and the tallest of it ain't so high as our two-year old."

"Well! the Lord have mussy on us if the spring gins out! We'll have to take the little ones on our backs, and start for a new place," she replied, in the patient tone of a woman who had been two years in a new country, and become accustomed to all kinds of disasters.

"No great dangers of that, I guess," answered the husband, sturdily.

He was an energetic man, whose will arose in proportion to the difficulty to be encountered; and he was already beginning to recover from the slight feeling of depression occasioned by the unusual weather. His wife had great respect for his abilities, trusting implicitly in his judgment.

"I wish you'd come here, Melissy, and see if you can make out what this is comin' over the prairie at such a sweepin' pace," he said a few moments after.

She just stepped to put the cover on the bake-kettle, so that the johnny-cake might be cooking, and, hastening to his side, laid her hand on his shoulder, and peered out in the direction which he indicated.

"Seems to me it's buffaloes," said she.

"Waal, then, I'll go out and scare them from this direction, or they'll be tearing through my corn," said Peter, arising.

"Don't you think you'd better try and get fences around your fields another year, husband?"

"Law, Melissy, them's people on horseback!—coming this way, too.—They'll stop here, I s'pose."

"I haint seen a livin' human being except you and the children for so long, they'll look quite strange. I hope I've got victuals enough for supper. How many do you make out, Peter?"

"Only two."

"And sakes alive, ef one of 'em isn't a woman! How they do ride! And she keeps even with him."

"She's a regular trump!" exclaimed the squatter, emphatically. "Where *be* they going in this wilderness? Thar ain't a place I can think of to which they might be goin'."

Curiosity now so absorbed them that they watched in silence the near approach of the strangers. It was no wonder they were dumb with surprise as a close approach made their features and dress distinguishable. To their uneducated senses the woman appeared an angelic vision of beauty. She rode her horse with enchanting ease and grace; her elegantly fitting habit of cloth flowed down to his feet: her small, gloved hands grasped lightly the reins of a riding-whip. A beaver hat, with broad, rolling brim, shadowed her face. Her hair had apparently been closely knotted up, but half of it had escaped in beautiful curls and tangles about her cheeks and neck; her cheeks were glowing with the exercise and fresh air. She did not look more than eighteen years of age. But what struck these simple people with the most admiration was that indescribable, high-bred manner, devoid of all affectation or coldness, with which she reined up her horse, and bent to hear what her companion said, and they should say.

"Can you tell me how far it is to Beaver Creek settlement?" asked the young man as they stopped before the cabin.

"Forty-eight miles. Be you a going thar?"

"Forty-eight miles!" exclaimed the gentleman, in a tone of despair. "We were told it was but fifty from Bear River, and I am sure we have ridden full fifty miles to-day."

"Bless my heart and soul, that's bad, friend!" said Peter Potter. "You've been riding off the track, if you came from Bear River. You've kept away south, instead of west, over the perrairie, almost at right angles from where you ought to have gone. It's mighty hard navigating these perrairies tu a stranger. You should have steered by the sun."

"I had the landmarks pointed out, so that I felt safe to attempt the way," said the gentleman, in a despondant tone. I should have done better, as you say, to take the sky for my chart."

"What *shall* we do, Edwin?" asked the young wife, turning her troubled eyes to her husband's face.

"Do?" exclaimed Peter, in his blunt and hearty way. "Why, get right off that horse, and have such supper and lodgings as we can give. You must be o'en a'most tired to death. You're too delicate a creatur' for such a jaunt as you've been takin'. Wife will make ye as comfortable as the cabin'll allow; and, after a night's rest, you can better make up your minds about a fresh start."

"Your hospitality shall be accepted as frankly as offered," replied the young man, leaping from his horse, and helping his wife to dismount.

"No hospitality about it. The latch-string is out of every man's cabin in this country. It's poor enough, the best that we've got to set before our friends.—Here, Melissy, take 'em in, and see to that poor, tired lady, while I tether the horses."

"You are indeed wearied to death, my Alice," said her husband, looking into her face, which had suddenly grown pale when the excitement of the ride was over, with the deepest tenderness. "How bitterly must I regret my selfishness in causing you to suffer these ills!"

"I am only a little fatigued. I have ridden as far, for sport only, many a time when I was a girl, you know, Edwin. A night's repose will recruit me—so do not speak of it."

The rough exterior of the cabin, with its pig-pen in the back-ground, had not promised much to the travelers; but the hopelessness of their case had made any place of shelter welcome. When they entered the one apartment, however, they found it as neat as circumstances would permit, and not destitute of an air of comfort. The lady's heavy riding-habit was laid aside, and cool water brought in a wooden bowl in which she bathed her face and hands; then the good housewife insisted upon her lying down on a lounge which her husband's skill had constructed, and which was her especial pride in the way of furniture. The body was made of unpeeled saplings, bound together firmly with bark. Stout strips of the inner lining of bark were woven across the top; and upon this not unelastic frame-work a cushion, made of an old bed-quilt and stuffed with prairie hay, was laid. Glad indeed was the weary lady to repose here while the preparations for supper went briskly on.

"I wonder where on arth my children be!" Mrs. Potter fretted as she bustled about. "I expect every day when'll get lost, or snake-bitten, or something aruther. Oh, you there, Dan, Amos!" going to the door with a basin, as the two curly-headed and brown-faced boys came around the corn-field, "put, quick, for the blackberry patch—and mind you pick enough, for there's company to tea."

"Company to tea!" When ever had they heard their mother say that before? They could not obey her mandate to hurry until they had stolen up to the door and peeped in like frightened wild creatures, shy but curious. Then, when they had met the eyes of the beautiful lady smiling at them, off they darted as if her glances had been Indian arrows.

It may be that fifty miles of riding, with only a noon lunch eaten under a paw-paw tree, is especially good for the appetite, taking away all extra fastidiousness from epicureans. Be that as it will, when our travelers took seats on the rough bench placed for them before the table (which was drawn as near the door as possible to be away from the heat of the fire-place,) they ate supper enough, almost, to satisfy the hospitable desires of their host and hostess. Barley-coffee, seasoned with rich cream and maple-sugar, was not a distasteful beverage.—The johnny-cake was yellow as gold, light, and nicely browned over; "delicious," as any one might truly call it—There was fresh butter, too, and a huge dish of blackberries and cream. Even the pork, fried crisp and dipped in flour and butter, was not scorned by the gentleman. The two-tined steel forks with horn handles, the blue-rimmed earthen plates, and cracked cups were scrupulously clean, and therefore good enough for lords and ladies.

These guests at the humble table of Peter Potter had supped off gold service in their native land; but there was no hint of it in the manner with which they accepted the plain hospitalities of squatter life.

It was twilight when the meal was over. The strangers sat in the door admiring the magnificent stretch of prairie over which they had passed, while the hostess washed up the dishes and put her two sons to bed on a home-made mattress which she spread out on the floor. Peter Potter, having milked the cow and fed the pigs, seated himself on a log outside the door, and entered into conversation with his guests. By means of his Yankee inquisitiveness he soon learned that they were English, that they had been in America but a few months, and that, failing to get satisfactory employment in the Eastern cities, Mr. Lancaster (for thus the gentleman gave his name) had concluded to come to that "Far West," of which he had heard so much, in search of a home and the means of living.

The honest squatter regarded the young couple, so delicately reared, so inexperienced, and now so nearly desponding, with a grave face.

"I tell you what it is, stranger, it's hard for rough ones, like my wife and me, to put up with the inconveniences of a new country. Sickness and hard work are the lot of the most; though, thank the Lord, we pitched on a healthy spot; no fever an' ager *here*. But it's bad up to Beaver Creek. I don't see, for the life of me, how you calcilate to get along!"

"Oh, do not say anything, Mr. Potter, to discourage my husband! He is almost broken in spirit now," pleaded the soft voice of the young wife, as she stole her hand into her husband's, while a tear, wrung from her more by the nervousness of fatigue than a failure of mental courage, dropped upon her lovely cheek. She smiled and blushed and brushed it away. Peter's generous heart dissolved within his breast at sight of that tear so patiently wiped away; and he would have done anything in his power to aid the young couple, so won were his sympathies by the beauty and gentleness of the lady.

"Waal, I don't see what on airth brought him out West, unless he's got the raal stuff in him to make a pi'neer.—It takes considerable budily strength, and patience to wait to see things grow, and a mind to put up with hardships, to make a good pi'neer."

"Oh, Edwin has a great deal of courage!" said the young wife, nestling her hand closer in her husband's. "But he is not very strong; and he knows nothing about work."

"P'r'aps you came out intendin' to specilate?" added the squatter, looking sharply at his guest. "Ef you've money to invest, may-be Beaver Creek's a good place. You might set up a store, or a mill, or the like."

Mr. Lancaster smiled at the ease with which his host was making himself familiar with his affairs, but replied frankly: "I am sorry to confess that I have not money enough even to set up a small store. I came here because I was poor, and did not know what else to do. I supposed it was easy for a man to make his fortune at the West."

"Which was all a mistake, of course, stranger. Howsomever, there's land enough, land enough to live on, and you can have all you've a mind to squat on. You can raise vittals enough to eat; and, if ever your land grows val'able and comes into market, may-be you'll get rich."

"Rather a discouraging prospect, Mr. Potter.,'

"Rayther; but things may look more cheerful in the morning. There's your wife a droppin' asleep agin your shoulder, she's so done out, poor thing. Melissy, the bed's ready, ain't it, for the lady?"

It was in vain to remonstrate against taking the only bed of the good people. Mrs. Potter had put on clean sheets and prepared it for her guests. She was to take the lounge, and her husband brought in a large arm'ful of prairie hay and threw a buffalo-skin over it, for his couch.—There was no curtain or division of any kind to shelter the bed from general observation; but, as the lady, weary and sleepy as she was, stood hesitating what step to take towards preparing for slumber, the hostess exclaimed: "Peter, turn your back—the lady wants to undress."

So Peter "turned his back" to the bed and sat in the door whistling, and his partner came and sat by him until the "company" were safely in between the sheets; then they, too, retired, and the cabin was hushed to profound repose.

Once, during the night, Mr. Lancaster was aroused by the subdued laughing of his wife, and whispered to her with surprise to ascertain the cause of her mirth—he did not know but fatigue had rendered her hysterical.

"We have very little to laugh at, I know, Edwin; but I was just picturing what the effect would have been if your haughty mother and sisters could have seen us retiring for the night." And the young wife smothered her silvery laughter in the pillow.

"They would have died of horror—particularly Arabella."

"They would have fainted at the very least—one after the other—and sank down in a graceful group into the arms of their attendants. It would make a pretty *tableau vivant*, would it not, if the cabin and drawing room could be combined in one grand effect?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Select Miscellany.

The Drunkard's Death

What a spectacle is this? What a lesson does it teach! The destruction of man's corporeal frame is not pleasant under any circumstances. The taking down his "clay tabernacle," even when he hopes to enter a "building not made with hands," in the upper skies, has something melancholy in it. But when we see a mortal stretched upon his dying couch whose life has been spent in debauchery and revelry, what is there connected with him or his, either past or present, or future, that does not present the most horrible and forbidding aspect? Life is gone—property wasted—character blasted—wife and children beggared—there he lies upon his bed of straw, with parched lips, bloated countenance, and bloodshot eyes, the very personification of ruin.—Tossing upon his hard and comfortless couch, panting for breath, and calling for help, all in vain. Death marks him for his victim, and now, for a while he is relieved from frightful ghosts and demons which hitherto his disordered imagination, conscience, the sleepless monitor, with redoubled vigor, assails his conscious soul, and brings up before him every act of his worthless life, to blast all hope, to plunge him in deeper agony, and to hurry his affrighted spirit into the presence of his God. How loudly and bitterly does he complain of himself, of life, of friends, of God.

He prays, but it is the angry imprecation of a doomed spirit, demanding of his Maker a speedier discharge. The wild glare of his scorched eyes, his restless tossing, his retching hiccough, and his deep hollow groans, tell us how hard it is for a drunkard to die. The very presence of his once loved wife and children, kindle in his bosom, in advance, the very fires of hell. The soothing voice of mercy and the plaintive prayer of the man of God kneeling by his bedside, but add fuel to the already raging flame. He calls for water! water! water! now, ere he takes up his habitation "one drop" will not be allowed him; but, ah! the cool draught only adds force to the devouring fire. Friends gather around to take a last farewell, and his tremulous hand is extended to bid them adieu;—thoughts of the past and of the future send their withering arrows, barbed with the poison of death, to his bursting heart; and with one strong, agonizing struggle, his ruined soul staggers into the spirit land to receive its sentence. Pity, compassion, humanity, would let the veil drop here, and cover up till the great assize the doom of the deluded, misguided wretch, but Divine truth has said, "All drunkards shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."—*Spirit of the Age.*

A Scene in Virginia.

While traveling not long ago in one of the south-western counties in Virginia, the following thrilling incident took place: Starting in the stage coach soon after breakfast, the morning being a delightful one in the latter part of the month of May, I took my seat on the box by the side of the driver, and behind me, on the top, was seated a bright, intelligent-looking mulatto boy, apparently of eighteen years of age. After being on the road a few minutes, I turned about and asked him where he was going. He replied he was going down a few miles to live with Master ——, who kept the stage coach at the west stand; that he had lived with him the last summer, and that his master had sent him down to live with him the coming season.

Turning from the boy, the driver remarked to me in an under tone, "the boy is deceived; I am taking him down to the slave-pen, a few miles on, where slaves are kept preparatory to being sent to Louisiana; this deception is practised to get him from his home and mother without creating a disturbance on the place."

Shortly we drew near to the place where the boy supposed he was to stop; he began to gather up, preparatory to leaving the stage, the few articles he had brought away from his home. The driver said to him in a decided tone of voice, "You are not to get off the stage here"—"Yes I is, quickly replied the boy, I'se got a letter for Master ——. I'se going to live there this summer." By this time we had reached the house, and Master —— making his appearance, John, (for that was the name of the boy,) delivered his letter and appealed to Master —— to be relieved from the command of the driver. The Master made no reply, as this kind of deception was no new thing to him. After reading the letter and folding it up, he was about putting it in his pocket, when it flashed on the mind of the boy that he was sold and was bound for the slave pen. He exclaimed in agony, "Tell me, Master, if I'se sold!" No reply was made. He exclaimed again, "Tell me if I'se sold! This last appeal brought the response. "Yes, John, you are sold."

The boy threw himself back on the top of the stage, and rolling in agony, set up such a wail of woe as no one in the stage could endure; even the hotel keeper walked away in shame, and the driver hurried into his box and drove off in haste, to drown the noise of his cry.

The passengers were all deeply moved by the distress of the boy, and tried in various ways to soothe his wounded and crushed spirit, but his agony was beyond the reach of their sympathy.

When his agony had somewhat abated, he exclaimed, "O, if they had only let me bid my mother good-bye. They have lied to me! If they had a'told me I was sold and I could a'bid my mother good-bye, I'd a gone without making them trouble, hard as it is." By this time we had passed on some two or three miles since leaving the last stand; when drawing near to a pretty thick wood, the boy became tranquil. Waiting till he had entered the wood a few rods, he darted from the top of the stage, and ran into the woods; as agile as a deer, no doubt with the feeling that it was for his life. The driver instantly dropped his reins, and pursued the boy. Proving himself no match, he returned exclaiming, "You see, I have done what I could to catch him."

He mounted his box and drove on a mile or so, when he reigned up his horses to a house, and calling to the keeper, asked, "Where are your sons?" He replied they left home this morning, with the dogs, to hunt a negro, and would not be home before night. The driver said to him that Mr. —— had sent his boy John on the stage that morning to be delivered at the pen, and that he had jumped from the top of the stage and taken to the woods. His reply was: "We will hunt him for you to-morrow." The driver said he wished only to notify him of his being in the woods.

As we drove on, I made the inquiry, How long have you been driving on this road? He replied, about fifteen years.—Do you frequently take negroes down to the slave pen? Yes, frequently. What will become of this boy John? He replied, He will skulk about the woods until he is nearly starved, and will some night make his way up to his master's house, and in about two weeks I shall bring him down again to the slave pen in hand-cuffs. After a pause, even this driver, feeling his degradation in being the instrument of such misery, broke out in exclamation;—This is a cursed business; in this case this is not the worst feature in it. The man who sold him is his own father.—*N. Y. Independent.*

[Correspondence of the San Francisco Herald.]

Polygamy in Utah.

FILLMORE CITY, Utah,
Sept. 15, 1856.

As it may be a matter of interest to the Gentile world to know how fast our people are in Utah Territory, I will give you briefly a list of the standing among the women of the members of the last Legislature, that is their names, and the number of wives, to-wit:

Of the members of the Council, thirteen persons:—	
Heber C. Kimball, Pres't of Council	57
Daniel H. Wells, Councilman, cross-eyed	19
Albert Carrington, cripple and near-sighted	21
Orson Pratt, do do do	7
Wilford Woodruff do do do	12
John Stoker, do do do	8
Lorin Farr, do do do	3
Lorenzo Snow, do do do	25
L. E. Harrington, do do do	8
Benj. F. Johnson, do do do	4
Isaac Morley, 72 years old	5
John A. Ray, from Texas	2
George A. Smith, cripple and near-sighted	5
Grand total, men 13—women	171
House of Representatives, twenty-six members:	
J. M Grant Speaker, has	—
W. W. Phelps, printer of Morgan's book	—
A P. Rockwood, an old man	—
Edwin D. Woolfey, a small man	—
J. W. Cummings, cripple	1
Hosea Stout, lawyer from Kentucky —3 dead	1
S. W. Richards, young and hand-lawyer,	1
Jesse C. Little, lawyer of Boston Mass	—
William Snow, Vermont laborer	—
P. H. Young, elder brother of Brigham—tailor	—
C. V. Spencer, of Mass., quite small, has but	1
Ezra S. Benson, old and homely	15
James Snow, quite poor,	3
Aaron Johnson, has three sisters, and altogether	6
Lorenzo H. Hatch, wagon maker	2
Jacob G. Bigler, farmer	10
John Eldridge, phrenologist—two dead	1
Isaac C. Hait, Coal digger	12
Jesse N. Smith, lawyer	1
John D Parker, old and deaf	3
Jesse Hobson, ox teamster	10
J. C. Wright, hotel keeper	5
James Brown dairyman	7
Enoch Ross, farmer	2
W. A. Hickman, one of the Danites	3
Total	157
To which add officers of the House, to wit:	
Thomas Bullock, clerk, and an Englishman	4
J. Grimshaw, assistant clerk, and an Englishman	5
Chandler Holbrook, foreman, and deaf	4
Jacob F. Hutchinson, messenger	2
Joel H. Johnson, chaplain	7
Total	22

To which add 68 of the number then living of Governor Young's wives, and you have the whole number of females thus represented by the members of the Legislature, officers of same, and his Excellency, amounting to 420; or in other words, 40 men have 420 wives. These Mr. Editor, are sober truths, and in what they will end is for the dark and doleful future.

LIGHTING CARS BY GAS.—We learn from the Chicago *Press* that the experiment of lighting railroad cars by gas was tried on the Galena and Chicago U. R. R. a few nights since with entire success. The invention, it says, is the work of Messrs. Hill & Demarest, Rochester, N. Y.

Letter from Governor Chase.

The Republicans of Chicago, on Wednesday last, had a grand banquet in honor of the victory achieved by them in the election of Governor Bissell and the Republican State Ticket. A number of distinguished gentlemen were invited to be present, among whom was Governor Chase of Ohio. He could not attend, but sent the following letter, which we found in the Chicago Daily *Journal* of the 11th:

COLUMBUS, Dec. 1st, 1856.

GENTLEMEN:—Few things would give me more pleasure than to partake personally in your rejoicings on account of the Republican State Ticket in Illinois. But the duties of my position imperatively forbid my absence at this time from this city. Though I cannot be with you personally, however, let me assure you that I shall be with you in all the sympathies of my heart.

It is true that your rejoicings must be tempered, not merely by the reflection that the victory achieved was a victory over political opponents, whom you yet hope by fairness, conciliation and sound argument to convert into political friends but also by the consideration that while great good has been accomplished by the brilliant result of your State election, the friends of Freedom and Reform have failed in their efforts to elect their National candidates and to redeem the country from the dominion of the Slave Power.

But complete success is reserved for the future. I fully agree with you in "believing that the friends of Free Speech, Free Thought and Freedom have laid the foundation for ultimate triumph." It is only needed that upon this foundation we build wisely, never intermitting our work.

Trusting that the election of the gallant gentleman—by calling whom to her Executive Administration, Illinois has honored herself not less than him—and of his worthy associates upon the State Ticket, is but a precursor of the complete union of all who prefer Free States to Slave States, Slavery Restriction to Slavery Extension, and a National Government inspired by the idea of Liberty to a National Government possessed by the spirit of Despotism, and of the glorious victory which such a complete union will insure, I remain, gentlemen,

Yours, very respectfully,
S. P. CHASE.

Messrs. J. M. Richards, C. O. Thompson and Chas. L. Wilson, Committee.

Telegraph Line Across the Atlantic.

This stupendous project, which, when it was first spoken of, was regarded as utopian, is being prosecuted with the utmost vigor, and with a fair prospect of success. Advices from London by the Africa, state that the subscriptions for the cable, designed to connect Ireland with New Foundland, considerably exceed the amount required to cover all expenses. This shows that a high degree of confidence is felt in the feasibility of the project among the scientific men of England. The great wire cable is now being manufactured at the rate of from ten to fifteen miles per day, and it is rendered certain that the whole extent of 2000 miles will be completed by the 1st of June, 1857. The opening of a line of elegraph between Europe and America if successful, will render the 16th century memorable beyond all preceding ones.

COUNTRY PRESS.—The Albany *Journal* well says:—

We consider it a matter of the highest political and social consequence that the country Newspapers of the State of New York should be strengthened and maintained. It will be an evil day in the history of our civilization, when an aggrandized City Press crushes the rural Journals—if that day shall ever come. The very best thought, the very wisest impulse, of the great municipal hot-bed, where millions of every grade and temper chafe daily together, cannot profitably be taken at the firesides of our farm-houses in exchange for the spirit and simple wisdom of rural Democracy.

A WORD IN SEASON.—An exchange from a locality where they have already had snow, remerks—and we copy for "the benefit of whom it may concern," when the time comes. The season for the healthy exercise of shoveling snow has arrived, and our citizens will soon have to turn out in the morning and clear the path. Particular care should be taken that the path be duly wide enough to admit the free passage of ladies with the hooped skirts, with switching off places at intervals in case two of them should happen to meet.

President Pierce undertakes to tell what the people decided by the late election. They at least decided that they didn't want any more of him.—*Louisville Journal.*